

GUESSING SONGS .
AND OTHER RHYMES
FOR CHILDREN

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oec
25
Alas - I shall be found on Saturday

Among the sea-fowl on the Isle of May,

Which Lowell - had he suffer'd such restraint -
would certainly have styled "The Isle of Mayn't" !

H. J.

GUESSING SONGS AND OTHER RHYMES

Henry Johnstone

GUESSING SONGS AND OTHER RHYMES FOR CHILDREN

BY

HENRY JOHNSTONE

CORRIGENDA

P. 24. *Insert* "way" in 2nd line, which should run—

"Looking this way and that way out over the land.

P. 77. *Delete* "word" the first time it occurs in 3rd line from end.

F. & E. MURRAY

EDINBURGH

MCMVI

Henry Robinson

GUESSING SONGS AND
OTHER RHYMES
FOR CHILDREN

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HENRY JOHNSTONE

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OF the verses in this book some have already been published in *The Edinburgh Academy Chronicle* or in one of the following American periodicals: *The Congregationalist*, *The Holiday Magazine*, now *The Children's Magazine*, *The Interior*, *The Kindergarten Review*, *The Nursery*, *St Nicholas*. The Author desires to acknowledge the courtesy which permits him to republish them here.

PZ 22 128

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ROSE IN THE BUD

Rose in the Bud, if it were May
All the year round, and time would stay
Still at a stand, might always be
Rose in the Bud unchanged for me.

Rose in the Bud must be in time
Rose in the Bloom, and upward climb
Out of my reach so far, that I
Barely may greet her and pass by.

Rose in the Bloom, will you forget
How, in the days when first we met,
Rose in the Bud, not yet reveal'd
Unto the world, our friendship seal'd?

FOR YOU

FOR YOU

FOR you, whom I have known of old
And play'd with many a time,
This book is meant, whose pages hold
Some reason and more rhyme ;

To you no less my songs I send,
Playmate that might have been,
Dear neighbour at earth's other end,
Whom I have never seen :

For all the labour that I took
Will weigh as light as air,
If only, when you read my book,
You find some pleasure there.

GUESSING SONG

OH ho! oh ho! Pray, who can I be?

I sweep o'er the land, I scour o'er the sea;

I cuff the tall trees till they bow down their heads,

And I rock the wee birdies asleep in their beds.

Oh ho! oh ho! And who can I be

That sweep o'er the land and scour o'er the sea?

I rumple the breast of the grey-headed daw,

I tip the rook's tail up and make him cry "caw";

But though I love fun, I'm so big and so strong,

At a puff of my breath the great ships sail along.

Oh ho! oh ho! And who can I be

That sweep o'er the land and scour o'er the sea?

I swing all the weather-cocks this way and that,

I play hare-and-hounds with a run-away hat,

But however I wander, I ne'er go astray,

For go where I will, I've a free right-of-way.

Oh ho! oh ho! And who can I be

That sweep o'er the land and scour o'er the sea?

I skim o'er the heather, I dance up the street;

I've foes that I laugh at and friends that I greet:

I'm named in the country, I'm known in the town,

For all the world over extends my renown,

Oh ho! oh ho! And who can I be

That sweep o'er the land and scour o'er the sea?

THE MIRROR

THE MIRROR

IF with your shining eyes you look
Upon the pages of this book,
Perhaps you'll see, to your surprise,
A face look back with shining eyes :
But never think that they are mine,
Those lips that laugh, those eyes that shine ;
Turn to the looking-glass, and there
You'll find the self-same eyes and hair,
And learn that in the book you see
The shadow of yourself, not me.

GUESSING SONG

I'm early up in summer-time,
In winter I lie late :
One half the day I climb and climb
And never stop to bait ;

And after that I sink and sink
Until I'm out of sight,
And then the stars begin to blink
And people call it night.

In summer I stay up to sup ;
In winter-time, instead,
I care so little to sit up
I get my tea in bed.

So high I climb, so far I go,
So well and widely see,
That every one on earth I know,
And every one knows me.

So, if you cannot point me out—
Or tell my name—at once,
They'll reckon you, beyond a doubt,
No better than a dunce.

WISH

WISH

IF only I could make you see
What I see in my head—
Oh, such a tall and stately tree,
All over berries red!

And hidden in a cunning nook
Just half-way up my tree,
But where I can climb up to look,
A starling's nest for me.

And on the very topmost bough,
No bigger than a wren,
The old cock-starling sitting now,
And looking down on men.

Oh, but he's full of clever plans,
And he can talk and sing,
And wag his wings like little fans,
And scream like anything!

And if a swarm of bees would come—
I'd let them if they like—
All round about my tree they'd bum
And build me there a byke.

If I had only such a tree
To stand upon my green,
The best of gardens mine would be
That ever yet was seen!

GUESSING SONG

Two servants listen, two look out,
Two fetch and carry for their share,
And two are sturdy knaves and stout,
Well used their master's weight to bear.

And may I not be proud and bold,
With eight such servants, tried and true,
That never wait until they're told,
But know themselves what they've to do?

THE LAND OF HOMPITOU

THE LAND OF HOMPITOU

IN snowy raiment, with eyes shut tight,
I mount my steed at the fall of night,
And ride the bounds of Wide-awake through
Till I come to the Land of Hompitou.

Oh, that is a land all lands beyond—
Kings are as plenty as frogs in a pond,
And the finest peacock that ever flew
Would be counted a wren in Hompitou.

The dogs are all head, with no bodies at all,
All roof the houses, with never a wall,
And the commonest things are strange and new
In the wonderful Land of Hompitou.

They're never sad there, and never sick,
And the men are taller than Uncle Dick,
And the funniest pictures ever he drew
Would be nothing at all in Hompitou.

The people—queerer I never met,
And the sea's all dry and the land all wet,
The sky is green and the turf sky-blue,
All over the Land of Hompitou.

The bells are chimed and the cannons roar,
You never heard such a noise before,
Such a din and shindy and hullabaloo
As rings through the Land of Hompitou.

At last I turn and the spurs I smite
In the flanks of my steed with his trappings white,
For that was a Wide-awake cock that crew,
And I may not linger in Hompitou.

So I ride till I draw my rein once more
Ten steps inside of the Nursery-door,
And I open my eyes; but I know it's true
That I've been in the Land of Hompitou.

GUESSING SONG

GUESSING SONG

With dancing step I touch the ground
Where seeds and roots are sleeping sound,
And straightway they wake up from sleep
And towards the light begin to creep.

With tender hand each bud I stroke
On thorn and rowan, ash and oak,
Until they open, one by one,
And spread their leaves to catch the sun.

I croon a carol of good cheer,
And all the birds, both far and near,
Take up the tune till loud and long
The woods are ringing with their song.

THE FAIRIES' YEAR

WHEN Spring returns with golden hours
We play among the white wind-flowers
And kiss their buds awake :
In Summer-time the whole night long
With feast and triumph, dance and song,
Mirth in the woods we make.

In Autumn through the air we speed
To chase the thistle-down, or bead
The spider's wheel with dew ;
But ere the frost grows strong we creep
Safe underground, and there we sleep
Till Spring comes round anew.

GUESSING SONG

GUESSING SONG

UNDER the ground they put me to bed
And smooth'd the brown blankets over my head,
And there through the months of frost I lay,
Dreaming all night and dozing all day.

Then came the Spring, and out of her cup
She spilt the warm rain and it woke me up,
For it fell on my bed and soak'd me so
That I stirr'd and stretch'd and began to grow.

Up through the blankets I poked my way
And out I peep'd on a clear, warm day,
When the air was so sweet and the sky so bright
That my heart was fill'd with joy and delight.

They praise my shape and my colour fine,
And they say my breath is sweeter than wine,
But the pleasure I give is only a part
Of the joy that lies deep down in my heart.

THE SKY-TREAT

THE Sun must have his hair brush'd, the Moon must wash her face,
And all the little Stars must sit, each in his proper place ;
Then we'll hand them bread and butter, and a cookie, and a pear,
And sweet milk in a china mug to every one that's there.

We hope the Moon will not be shy, nor yet the Sun too bold,
And as for all the Stars—we're sure they'll be as good as gold ;
If they were rude or naughty—which they do not mean to be—
They know as well as we do it would spoil our pleasant tea.

And when they've all had quite enough we'll clear the things away,
And round about the nursery we'll run and jump and play ;
We're sure to find that we can think of lots of pleasant games,
And won't it be a piece of fun to ask the Stars their names?

There's Venus and Aldebaran and Jupiter, I know,
And Saturn, Mars, and Sirius—for Father told me so ;
And when we've learnt to spell them all, and how they should be said,
We'll give them each a present and we'll pack them off to bed.

GUESSING SONG

GUESSING SONG

HIGH up in the branches a basket I made,
And in that basket my treasures I laid ;
Early or late, in calm or storm,
I cover my treasures and keep them warm.

It is weary work, but I hope and pray
That my treasures may come alive some day,
And grow and grow, till away they fly,
As big and as black and as bold as I.

VIOLETS, VIOLETS

VIOLETS, Violets, where did you hide?

Through the long summer we sought you in vain,
Autumn and winter came on, and we cried
“When will the Violets blossom again?”

Now, while the snow on the hillside aloft
Dwindles each day as the summer draws near,
Passing the bank where we sought you so oft,
By your sweet breath we discover you here.

Have you been hiding, or sleeping, or dead—
In the earth buried, or vanish'd in air?
Have you been with the Fairies and heard what they said,
Or with the bright Angels in Paradise fair?

GUESSING SONG

GUESSING SONG

THOUGH for myself I cannot see,
You, if you learn to look through me,
Will find that far-off things come near
And dim and cloudy things come clear.

But if you turn me round in play
And look through me the other way,
The things I show you will be all
Like fairy-treasures, bright and small.

WAKING IN SPRING

THE birds in the garden are astir
While I linger in Dreamland yet,
And they laugh at me for a loiterer
Whose heart upon sleep is set;
Bird against bird they vie and vaunt
Until such a noise they make
That amid my dreams I can hear their taunt,
“Wake, little Dormouse, wake!”

Then I turn in my bed, my arms I stretch,
And open my eyes and say,
“Up with you, up, you lazy wretch!
Are you going to doze all day?”
For the birds are calling with right good will,
And I know that of all their cries
This is the pith and the purport still,
“Rise, little Comrade, rise!”

So out of my bed I swiftly fling
To wash and to dress in haste,
For a day in spring is too sweet a thing
For children and birds to waste;
Then I say my prayers and away I go
Where the birds, that all night were dumb,
Sing through the garden, high and low,
“Come, little Playmate, come!”

GUESSING SONG

GUESSING SONG

WITH my head in the sky, like a giant I stand,
Looking this way and that out over the land :
Sometimes on my brow a white cap you may see ;
Sometimes a white mantle hangs down to my knee.

Far and wide men behold me, except on the days
When for reasons of state I retire from their gaze,
When I draw my grey curtains around me, and men
Have to wait till I choose to undraw them again.

SAILOR, SAILOR

SAILOR, sailor, where have you been?

What port do you hail from last?

Tell us of wonders you have seen,

Tell us of dangers past.

Have you been where the crashing iceberg quells

The hearts of whalers and sealers?

Have you been where the Lapland wizard sells

Fair breezes to suit fair dealers?

Have you seen the sword-fish fight with the whale,

Or the serpent huge and strong,

His body all plated, scale over scale,

And a hundred fathom long?

Have you touch'd at the Isles of Spice, and seen

The Paradise-birds that fly

For ever on wings of gold and green

And never alight nor die?

Has the whirlpool spun your good ship round?

Have you heard the church-bells ringing

Where under your keel a city lay drown'd,

Or the cruel mermaid singing?

Have you felt the terrible earthquake shock,

Or seen the volcano burn,

Or pass'd so near to the Lodestone Rock

That it made your compass turn?

Sailor, sailor, home from the seas,

Tell us of dangers past,

Of coral islands, and upas trees,

And how you got home at last.

GUESSING SONG

GUESSING SONG

ON a house I build a house, a cot of crusted clay :
Half the year I tarry here, and half I spend away.

Though Scotland is my native land, and very dear to me,
Its winter dread would freeze me dead, and forces me to flee.

I leave no trace, I leave no track, as I pass to and fro :
Half my back is inky-black, and half is white as snow.

THE VENTURESOME VOYAGE

HAVE you heard of the Beasties that went for a sail
In a very stiff breeze on the back of the Whale,
 The Mouse and the Rat,
 The Beetle, the Bat,
And holding on fast to one fluke of his tail,
Who but the slobbity-blobbity Snail?

They travell'd as far and as fast as the Mail,
And when they got back, as they did without fail,
 The Beetle, the Bat,
 The Mouse and the Rat
Shouted together, their shipmate to hail,
"Snail ahoy! Slobbity-blobbity Snail!"

Little did shouting or searching avail:
All of the others had weather'd the gale;
 The Mouse and the Rat,
 The Beetle, the Bat,
All had come back again, hearty and hale,
All but the slobbity-blobbity Snail.

GUESSING SONG

GUESSING SONG

My brother's bigger far than I
And shines more brightly in the sky,
But often when he's gone to bed
I do my best to shine instead.

Sometimes I grow, sometimes I shrink,
Sometimes I rise, sometimes I sink,
I shine by night, I'm dull by day ;
Now what do people call me, pray?

HUPPIMUP

IN the Land of Huppimup
Everything is downside up :
You see the people walking there
With head on earth and heels in air,
And all the churches in the land
Most strangely on their steeples stand :
The very coffee holds the cup
Through all the bounds of Huppimup.

The folk that dwell in Huppimup
At break of day sit down to sup,
But eat their breakfast last of all,
Just as the shades of evening fall :
There carts draw horses, mice eat cats,
Hard balls hit little boys with bats ;
Low bleats the dog, loud barks the tup,
Sweet sings the crow in Huppimup.

GUESSING SONG

GUESSING SONG

My house upon my back I bear,
And so, however far I roam,
By climbing backwards up my stair,
In half a minute I'm at home.

I travel slow and never speak,
I've horns—but never try to shove,
Because my horns are soft and weak,
Like fingers of an empty glove.

I start when it is raining fast
And leave a shining track behind me,
So now perhaps you know at last
What I am call'd and where to find me.

STAR-GAZING

WHAT is it makes the stars blink? Why cannot they be still?
They're surely shivering for cold, or else they must be ill:
Yet if they're really sick or cold, how can they shine so bright?
What is it keeps them blinking on all through the winter-night?

In summer there were fewer stars, and so when Susan said,
"How late it is! just say 'Good-night' and come your ways to bed,"
I used to shake my head at her, and ask the reason why,
If it was bed-time, scarce a star was shining in the sky.

But winter nights are starry nights, and when I lie awake,
I know it's starlight out of doors, and in my head I make
A story all about the stars, or else I think and think,
"Why do they shake and shiver so? What is it makes them blink?"

GUESSING SONG

GUESSING SONG

I PASS by tracks that no man knows
O'er level land and hilly ;
I whisper to the sleeping rose
And to the dreaming lily :

They hear and smile themselves awake :
The bees throng round to kiss them
And tell how sadly, while they take
Their long, long sleep, they miss them.

With buttercups the field I spread,
With cress I store the ditches,
And as I cross the strawberry-bed
I heap it high with riches.

Warm days I bring and skies of blue,
And—best of all my treasure—
I bring the holidays to you,
Long weeks of golden pleasure.

SNAKE STORY

THERE was a little Serpent, and he wouldn't go to school—

Oh, what a naughty little Snake!

He grinn'd and put his tongue out when they said it was the rule—

Ah, what a naughty face to make!

He wriggled off behind a stone and hid himself from sight—

Oh, what a naughty thing to do!

And went to sleep as if it were the middle of the night—

I wouldn't do like that, would you?

He dreamt of stealing linties' eggs and sucking them quite dry—

Oh, what a greedy thing to dream!

And then he dreamt that he had wings and knew the way to fly—

Ah, what a pleasure that would seem!

By came a collie dog and said, "What have we here?"

Oh, it's a horrid little Snake!"

He bark'd at him and woke him up and fill'd him full of fear—

Ah, how his heart began to quake!

How the Serpent got away he really didn't know—

Oh, what a dreadful fright he got!

But he hurried all the way to school as hard as he could go,

Dusty and terrified and hot.

As into school he wriggled, they were putting books away—

"Oh," says the master, "is it you?"

Stand upon that stool, sir, while the others go to play;

That's what a truant has to do."

GUESSING SONG

GUESSING SONG

FIRST I was one of a set of little eggs—

Tiny little eggs, almost too small to see ;

Next I began to crawl on little legs—

Lots of little legs, and they all belong'd to me.

Quickly I grew, for I ate and ate and ate,

Ate from morn till eve, since I'd little else to do,

And I liv'd upon a plant, where it was not hard to get

Food enough for me and for all my brothers too.

Then came a change, for another shape I took,

Cared no more for eating and grew both stiff and numb,

Hung, like a dead thing, hidden in a nook,

And waited for the days of my second life to come.

Long did I wait, but the change has come at last,

Wings at my shoulders waft me through the air ;

Sweet is my life and, remembering the past,

Gladly the lot of the things that fly I share.

THE LITTLE GIANT

THERE was once a little giant, only nine feet high ;

“Oh, dear me!” said the giant with a sigh,

“I am such a little giant,

Such a puny little giant,

Such a miserable giant, hardly bigger than a fly!”

He turn'd his back on Giant-land, and none could say him nay :

On and on he travell'd for a twelvemonth and a day ;

He was such a wilful giant,

So resolv'd and self-reliant,

So determined and defiant, he was bound to have his way !

But the other giants miss'd him and began to pine and pout ;

When they met for fun or business, they were sure to talk about

Their lamented little giant,

Such a merry little giant,

Such a jolly little giant, whom they could not do without !

They sent to him and begg'd him to come back, and by and by

All travellers through Giant-land were certain to espy

An attractive little giant,

Very courteous and compliant,

Such a jewel of a giant, only nine feet high !

GUESSING SONG

WE'RE partly from the garden and we're partly from the byre,
In the pleasant summer-time we come to you,
And our stay is but a short one, though we know you must desire
To see us every day the whole year through.

Red we are and white we are and sweet we are and good,
And at breakfast, or at dinner, or at tea,
Or at supper, we are certain without telling that we should
Get a welcome just as warm as it could be.

PETER PUFF-AND-BLOW

UP rose old Peter Puff-and-Blow

And puff'd and blew the whole night long,
Determin'd to let people know

How fresh he was, how stout and strong.

But though he was so strong and stout

And bawl'd and bluster'd through the gloom,
He could not puff the night-light out

That sway'd and flicker'd in my room.

The goblin shadows leapt and fell,

The night-light, wavering to and fro,
Burnt on till dawn and serv'd me well

In spite of Peter Puff-and-Blow.

GUESSING SONG

GUESSING SONG

HOLD your breath and shut your eyes,
To my mouth incline your ear ;
Whisper'd songs and lullabies
Of the mighty sea you'll hear.

Though the sea is far away
And I left it long ago,
From my cold lips to this day
You may hear its whispers flow.

GOOD-NIGHT PRAYER FOR A LITTLE CHILD

FATHER, unto Thee I pray,
Thou hast guarded me all day ;
Safe I am while in Thy sight,
Safely let me sleep to-night.

Bless my friends, the whole world bless,
Help me to learn helpfulness ;
Keep me ever in Thy sight :
So to all I say Good-night.

GUESSING SONG

GUESSING SONG

THE clouds are spent and passing by,
To leaf and blade the raindrops cling,
When over hill and over sky
My many-colour'd scarf I fling :

Short is the time I have to stay,
For long ere bush and grass are dry
I fold my shining scarf away
And bid the gazers all good-bye.

THE WOODLAND HOLD

COME if you dare and storm our hold,
Here in the broad oak's hollow breast;
Bold you must be and very bold,
If you think to scare us out of our nest!
Come if you dare!
What do we care?
You may trust to numbers or skill or strength,
But with volleys of acorns batter'd and pelted,
You'll reel and stagger and find at length
Your courage cow'd and your forces melted.

Come if you care as guests, not foes,
And we'll show you the nooks where our nuts are stor'd,
Our secret way, that no stranger knows,
And how we manage for bed and board.
Come if you care
Our stores to share,
And we'll bid you welcome and do our best
To make your visit a time of pleasure,
And trust you to own, when you leave our nest,
That we have not grudged you our choicest treasure.

GUESSING SONG

GUESSING SONG

I FLY abroad on silent wings,
I traverse land and deep ;
Comfort and mirth my left hand brings,
My right is charged with sleep.

O'er road and field and garden-plot
My widening shadow falls ;
I lead the labourer to his cot,
The horses to their stalls.

Home at my bidding troop the cows,
With milky breath and sweet,
While to their wonted roosting-boughs
The noisy rooks retreat.

The sleepy daisy shuts her eye,
The glow-worm trims his flame,
The stars are lighted in the sky,
And children name my name.

LULLABY

SLEEP, little Babe, and sleeping wait
For the Dream-procession at Slumber-gate,
Sleep, little Babe, and sleeping hear
The Dream-bells ring over Slumber-mere.

Sleep, little Babe, and sleeping go
To Slumber-bank where the Dream-flowers blow,
Sleep, little Babe, and sleeping see
The Slumber-fruits on the Dreamland-tree.

Sleep, little Babe, and sleeping stand
Where the Dream-king reigns over Slumberland,
Sleep, little Babe, and sleeping fly
With the Dreamland-birds through the Slumber-sky.

GUESSING SONG

GUESSING SONG

INTO the Fairies' tents we flit,
The Fairies' golden wine to steal ;
Then in our bins we treasure it
And every bin with wax we seal.

But while we rob the careless Elves,
Men steal again from us, and so
The wine we would enjoy ourselves
To sweeten human lips must go.

THE LITTLE MEMBER

You may keep your feet from slipping
And your hands from evil deeds,
But to guard your tongue from tripping,
What unceasing care it needs !
Be you old or be you young,
Oh, beware,
Take good care
Of your tittle-tattle, tell-tale tongue !

You may feel inclined to quarrel
With the doctrine that I preach,
But the soundness of the moral
Sad experience will teach :
Be it said or be it sung
Everywhere,
“ Oh, beware
Of your tittle-tattle, tell-tale tongue ! ”

GUESSING SONG

GUESSING SONG

UP out of the hill I make my way,
Down over the rocks I go,
And I jump and tumble, but make no stay
Till I come to the fields below.

In and out through the grass I wind,
Among cattle and patient sheep,
Till somewhere a shady nook I find
And loiter there half-asleep.

Then up I wake and hasten away,
Growing stronger and stronger still,
And the miller catches me at my play
And sets me to turn his mill.

But I slip from his yoke and away I go,
Till at last on my back folk ride,
And I smell the sea far away and know
I shall rest when I reach the tide.

A CHARM TO CALL SLEEP

SLEEP, Sleep, come to me, Sleep,
Come to my blankets and come to my bed,
Come to my legs and my arms and my head,
Over me, under me, into me creep.

Sleep, Sleep, come to me, Sleep,
Blow on my face like a soft breath of air,
Lay your cool hand on my forehead and hair,
Carry me down through the dream-waters deep.

Sleep, Sleep, come to me, Sleep,
Tell me the secrets that you alone know,
Show me the wonders none other can show,
Open the box where your treasures you keep.

Sleep, Sleep, come to me, Sleep :
Softly I call you ; as soft and as slow
Come to me, cuddle me, stay with me so,
Stay till the dawn is beginning to peep.

GUESSING SONG

GUESSING SONG

OUR mouths are always open, though we never eat or drink,
But when our tongues begin to wag, we make
A sound so loud and clamorous that people near us shrink,
Or stop their ears for fear that they should ache.

Sometimes we sob for sorrow and sometimes we fill the air
With merry song and laughter in our joy,
But on Sundays with our music to call young and old to prayer
Is our chief concern and regular employ.

SAINT SATURDAY.

OH, Friday night's the queen of nights, because it ushers in
The Feast of good Saint Saturday, when stewing is a sin,
When stewing is a sin, boys, and we may go to play
Not only in the afternoon, but all the livelong day.

Saint Saturday—so legends say—lived in the ages when
The use of leisure still was known and current among men ;
Full seldom and full slow he toil'd, and even as he wrought,
He'd sit him down and rest awhile, immers'd in pious thought.

He loved to fold his good old arms, to cross his good old knees,
And in a famous elbow-chair for hours he'd take his ease ;
He had a word for old and young, and when the village boys
Came out to play, he'd smile on them and never mind the noise.

So when his time came, honest man, the neighbours all declared
That one of keener intellect could better have been spared ;
By young and old his loss was mourn'd, in cottage and in hall,
For if he'd done them little good, he'd done no harm at all.

In time they made a saint of him, and issued a decree—
Since he had loved his ease so well and been so glad to see
The schoolboys gambol round him and to smile upon their play—
That children for his sake should have a weekly holiday.

SAINT SATURDAY

They gave his name unto the day, that as the years roll by
His memory might still be green, and that's the reason why
We name that name with gratitude, and oftener by far
Than that of any other saint in all the calendar.

Then big and little, girls and boys, give ear to what I say :—
Refrain from work on Saturdays as strictly as you may ;
So shall the Saint your patron be, and prosper all you do,
And when examinations come, he'll see you safely through.

GUESSING SONG

Down from the gloomy cloud
My glittering blade I fling,
And then I roar so loud
That all the echoes ring.

While men and beasts are all
Possess'd with sudden fears,
The pitying skies let fall
A deluge of warm tears.

IN THE TRAIN

IN THE TRAIN

OVER the bridge with a roar we go
And past the smiddy, and see below
The smoky chimneys and roof-tiles red :
Look, the carter runs to his horse's head,
And there are the children going to school :
Green fields next and a shady pool
Where the water-hen swims ; though she's very small,
She isn't afraid of the train at all.
But see how the horses startle and fly,
And then look back at us tearing by :
They may look and wonder, but on we thunder
Away and away and away.

The telegraph-poles go racing past
Back to the station we ran through last ;
The wires dip down, and then up they fly,
As if they were trying to reach the sky :
And see, there's a lintie—but oh, how absurd !
He's flying tail foremost, the mad little bird :
Yonder's a shepherd away on the hill,
Gathering his sheep ; he stands very still,
But his collie is racing and running in rings
To bring in the stragglers—the troublesome things.
Now the tunnel takes us, and roars and shakes us,
Like a great rough dog at his play.

Daylight again, and oh, look there !
A pheasant, a cock, flew past I declare,
Like a copper dragon-fly ever so big :
There's a man going out with a shovel to dig ;
I wonder if it's for treasure, or what ?
There's a rabbit—another—oh, quite a lot :
And now—but oh dear ! why we're getting in,
And they've clapp'd on the brakes—I call it a sin :
See, there's the church, and we're going quite slow,
And here's the station, and out we go.
Our journey's ended—but ah, how splendid
To travel express every day !

GUESSING SONG

GUESSING SONG

I HANG my lines on twig and spray
And, once the frame is fairly set,
Without a rest I weave away
To shape my curious hunting-net.

Next in the middle of my snare
Heels uppermost my place I take,
And wait without a movement there
Until the net begins to shake :

That is my dinner-bell, and so
Off to my dinner there and then
I hasten, for I do not know
How soon the net will shake again.

THE GENTLE GIANT

FAR back in the years, far back in the time
When beasts could reason and birds could rhyme,
There lived a Giant, so blythe and gay
That the whole of his life was a game of play.
He was the man, as the wise folks know,
That invented the games of keekie-bo,
Of blindman's-buff and of prisoners' base,
And that found out the way to run a race,
Besides contriving all kinds of toys—
Dolls, peeries, marbles—for girls and boys.

Whenever he thought of a good new game,
He'd settle the rules and find it a name,
And then to the school he'd go and pray
The mistress to grant a holiday,
And she didn't like, of course, to refuse
A Giant that stood ten feet in his shoes;
His temper, as every one knew, was good,
But still—ten feet in his shoes he stood.
So very often it came about
That the children were then and there let out,

THE GENTLE GIANT

And off they all went—"Hip, hip, hurray!"
With that Gentle Giant to spend the day.
Then they'd all make a rush, and pretend that he
Was a very dangerous enemy,
And though he would seem to struggle his best,
They'd get him down and sit on his chest,
Rumple his hair and pull his beard
And threaten his life, until it appear'd
That he'd got a new game in his head, which he
Would show them all, if they'd set him free :
And so, till the shades of evening came,
They'd play at this new and delightful game,
While the jolly birds and the beasts join'd in
And lent their voices to swell the din.

Now whether the Giant is living yet,
I cannot tell, but I don't forget
That my nurse used to say, with a serious face,
When I ask'd his name and his dwelling-place,
That she'd reason to think, from common rumour,
That he lived at Home, and was call'd Good Humour.

GUESSING SONG

Look in my face and you will there
Behold, in shape and colours true,
Another room and—sight more fair—
Another living, laughing you :

Put out your hand, and you will see
A hand to answer yours put out,
Or make a bow, and it will be
Return'd at once, beyond a doubt.

But though the room is there, supplied
With door and window, press and shelf,
In vain you seek to get inside
And share it with your other self.

THE FAIRY QUEEN

THE FAIRY QUEEN

ONCE, and but once, it was my fate
The Fairy Queen to see ;
No Sovereign keeps more royal state
In all the World than she.

When she came forth her Court to hold,
Her crown became her well,
For it was of the virgin-gold,
Won from the lily-bell :

The veil that floated from her hair
Of bindweed-bloom was made,
Her mantle of the twayblade fair,
With meadow-sweet o'erlaid :

Her gown was wrought of rose-leaves red,
Adorn'd with milk-wort blue,
Her girdle of the spider's thread,
Begemm'd with sparkling dew :

Her gloves were of white jessamine,
That sheds a perfume sweet,
Her shoes of creamy mushroom-skin,
To fit her Fairy feet :

A sundew-sceptre one hand grasp'd,
And sway'd it daintily,
While for an orb the other clasp'd
A ruddy strawberry.

The Fairy minstrels came before,
The Fairy train behind,
And many a quaint device they bore,
Of leaves and blossoms twined.

A royal march the minstrels play'd,
And royally the Queen
Pass'd by me where I knelt and made
Her progress o'er the green.

GUESSING SONG

GUESSING SONG

By night I breathe upon the green,
And in the morning early
O'er all the grass my breath is seen
Like ashes white and pearly.

I touch the trees, and up and down,
Where'er my cold hand lingers,
The leaves turn yellow, red, or brown
And shrink beneath my fingers.

I drive the swallow over seas,
I cut the daylight shorter,
I whistle softly, and the breeze
Blows from a colder quarter.

The paths I set my feet upon
Are spongy-soft and sodden,
And snows will fill, when I am gone,
The tracks that I have trodden.

CRADLE SONG

THE lambs their last good-night have said,
The grass is gathering dew,
And all the children are in bed,
And all asleep but you.
Sleep, and who knows but you shall see
The Fairies under the greenwood-tree
Frisking and whisking fast and free,
While for the light-heel'd crew
Chorister-Elf and Minstrel-Fay,
Perch'd upon twig and quivering spray,
Finger the lute and pour the lay,
Timing their measure true?

The glow-worms' lamps are trimm'd and lit,
The stars are shining fair,
And mossy seats, for Fairies fit,
Are scatter'd everywhere.
The Fairy-King and the Fairy-Queen,
Robed in the royal Fairy-green,
Honour the Elfin-rout and mean
Frolic and fun to share :
Follow their train and hope to see
The Fairy-games and the Fairy-glee,
Join in the dance yourself maybe,
And whirl with the wildest there !

GUESSING SONG

GUESSING SONG

ALTHOUGH we are so many and although we are so bright,
All day we keep in hiding and are only seen at night :

But though we are so little, we're strong and very old ;
We do not fear the darkness and we do not fear the cold.

Through summer-nights and winter-nights a constant watch we keep,
When the bees and the birds and the children are asleep.

Any fair and frosty evening, before you go to bed,
You may see us shining bright in the sky above your head.

THE PLEASURE HOUSE

SUPPOSE you were to come and see
My Pleasure House some day
And ramble over it with me,
I wonder what you'd say.

The floor is wide and very wide,
Well carpeted with green ;
The walls are set on every side
Too far off to be seen :

The ceiling's wide and raised so high
That nobody at all,
However hard he were to try,
Could hit it with a ball.

You'd see on one side of my floor
A bath so big, that there
A dozen jolly whales or more
Could play at hounds-and-hare.

And up and down, in front, behind,
Whichever way we stray'd,
I think we should be sure to find
A store of treasures laid.

THE PLEASURE HOUSE

Pebbles and shells, or flowers and leaves,
And buds and berries too,
Or webs the cunning spider weaves,
All hung with drops of dew.

The birds would sing us merry songs,
The butterflies would sway
About us, and in airy throngs
Would challenge us to play.

This House, with all it has to show,
Is mine, and may be yours
The first fine day you choose to go
And find it out of doors.

GUESSING SONG

SUN, wind, and rain upon me beat,
But though I sometimes shrink and sway,
So fast the strong earth holds my feet
I have no power to run away.

My feet are planted in the ground,
My head is half-way to the skies,
I spread my long arms out all round
And welcome every bird that flies.

I put new clothes on every spring
And wear them till the summer's past,
But then my clothes away I fling
And stand all naked to the blast.

It seems a curious thing to do
Perhaps, but, as no doubt you see,
I am not very much like you,
Nor are you very much like me.

HALLOWE'EN

HALLOWE'EN

DARE you go forth on Hallowe'en
To ride in the train of the Fairy Queen—
To ride by down and to ride by dale,
When clouds have muffled the moonlight pale?

You would hear the Fairies' bugle-strains
And the sound of their ringing bridle-reins,
And in front and in rear and all around
The beat of their horse-hoofs on the ground.

Your utmost skill, you would need it all,
To guide your horse and to shun a fall;
And what would you do when they rose at last
To sail like birds on the midnight blast?

Would you draw your bridle and gape and gaze,
As they stream'd out of sight in the thickening haze,
Or spur your steed till he rose in air
And keep your rank with the boldest there?

GUESSING SONG

EVERY day and every night,
Be it dark or be it bright,
In I come and out I go,
Stirring ever to and fro.

Now in thunder on I ride,
While my horses in their pride
Toss their snowy manes on high,
Stamp and snort and gallop by.

Now as gently do I crawl
As the snail upon the wall,
Or the shade, with stealthy pace
Creeping round the dial's face.

Morn and eve to me are one,
Blinking stars or blazing sun ;
Late and early, to and fro,
In and out I come and go.

THE FASTIDIOUS SERPENT

THE FASTIDIOUS SERPENT

THERE was a snake that dwelt in Skye,
Over the misty sea, oh ;
He liv'd upon nothing but gooseberry-pie,
For breakfast, dinner, and tea, oh.

Now gooseberry-pie—as is very well known—
Over the misty sea, oh,
Is not to be found under every stone,
Nor yet upon every tree, oh.

And being so ill to please with his meat,
Over the misty sea, oh,
The snake had sometimes nothing to eat,
And an angry snake was he, oh.

Then he'd flick his tongue and his head he'd shake,
Over the misty sea, oh,
Crying “Gooseberry-pie ! For goodness' sake
Some Gooseberry pie for me, oh !”

And if gooseberry-pie was not to be had,
Over the misty sea, oh,
He'd twine and twist like an eel gone mad,
Or a worm just stung by a bee, oh.

But though he might shout and wriggle about,
Over the misty sea, oh,
The snake had often to go without
His breakfast, dinner and tea, oh.

GUESSING SONG

UNLESS you blow, I cannot live,
And if too rough a puff you give,
 I perish then and there :
But gently blow, and I shall grow
Till I am big enough to go
 A-sailing in the air.

I'm round and light, and though my skin
Is very soft and very thin,
 Its colours may compare
With those that, when the conquering sun
Bursts forth before the rain is done,
 Adorn the rainbow fair.

OLD WINTER-WHITE-CLOAK

OLD WINTER-WHITE-CLOAK

OLD Winter-White-cloak, tottering on his toes,
Coughing and sneezing and shivering he goes,
Wraps his mantle round him, to keep his bones warm,
And staggers here and stumbles there, bewilder'd in the storm.

Old Winter-White-cloak, his clothes are worn and thin :
Tap upon the window and ask the Old Man in ;
Set him down before the fire and stir it to a blaze,
And he will tell you stories of the old, old days ;

He will tell you stories and he will sing you songs,
Of pretty maids and gallant blades that righted all their wrongs ;
And when the storm is over, he'll thank you ere he goes
Trudging off stoutly on his tired old toes.

GUESSING SONG

ONCE we were tears, a million tears,
And falling through the air
Upon a cornfield's waving ears,
We hung and glitter'd there.

Then softly to the earth we slipp'd,
And down a winding way,
That led us to the sea, we tripp'd
With song and laughter gay.

Yet weary of the sea we grew
And so, resolv'd to try
Another venture, up we flew
Until we reach'd the sky.

The sun was setting in his pride ;
Before he sank to rest,
A canopy, in crimson dyed,
We hung across the West.

Anon the bitter North began
To freeze us with his breath ;
He made us shiver—as he can—
And turn as cold as death.

GUESSING SONG

Down through the dark we fell unheard,
And at the break of day
As soft as down, as white as curd,
Upon the earth we lay.

The sun at first our pride reveal'd,
But when he gain'd his height,
We found ourselves compell'd to yield
And flee before his might.

For refuge to a pool we fled ;
Night follow'd, dark and still,
With stars that twinkled overhead
And bitter breath and chill.

So cold it grew that, long before
A second night had flown,
Our hosts had suffer'd one change more
And harden'd into stone.

Again the sun began to show
His might, and very soon
The soften'd stone began to flow
Beneath the blaze of noon.

And so from shape to shape we range,
And ever wandering through
Air, earth and sea, at every change
Find something fresh to do.

GOOD-NIGHT PRAYER

FATHER, loving, wise and strong,
Let Thy watchful eye
Be upon me all night long
While asleep I lie.

All Thy children Thou canst see
Wheresoe'er they are,
Darkness is not dark to Thee,
Distance is not far.

All the friends that love me bless,
All my sins forgive ;
Let me grow in helpfulness
Every day I live.

Thou art strong and I am weak ;
Father, help me still,
That I may not vainly seek
To obey Thy will.

Listen to me while I say
Loving thanks to Thee
For Thy goodness every day
Freely shown to me.

From the never-failing store
Of Thy love and might
On the world Thy blessing pour :
So I say Good-night.

GUESSING SONG

GUESSING SONG

A BEGGAR and a cripple too,
With ragged coat and leaky shoe,
I shake and shiver as I go ;
My breath is quick, my steps are slow.

I lean upon my stick to gaze
With knitted eyebrows through the haze,
And view with discontented air
The barren ground, the branches bare.

Anon I change my mood and laugh ;
My stick becomes a magic staff,
Three times I wave it, and my wand
To solid glass has turn'd the pond.

The boys and girls from every side
Come laughing down the brae to slide ;
Three times again I wave, and lo,
The air is fill'd with flakes of snow !

Then snow-balls fly from left and right,
I shake with laughter at the sight,
And as I turn to go away
I bless the children at their play.

THE RIDING OF THE FAIRY PARLIAMENT

HARK, the Fairy trumpets blow! See, the Fairy light-horse ride,
Every man with lance erect and his sabre at his side!
Then the Fairy Commons come, as the Fairy law requires,
From the sunny Fairy towns and the smiling Fairy shires.

Next behold the Fairy Lords, all in glistening array,
Mounted on their Fairy steeds, deck'd as gallantly as they,
And the Ministers of State, very sober and sedate,
Who in council with their King keep the Fairies free and great.

Here the Fairy Herald comes, in a coat of green and gold,
With his pursuivants at hand, very gorgeous to behold,
Closely follow'd by the Guard, every man prepared to die
For the Fairy King and Queen, and at least six inches high!

Now the Fairy Queen you see, brightest lady in the land,
With her crown upon her head and her sceptre in her hand;
Last appears the Fairy King, and before him as he comes
“Dub-a-dub, dub-a-dub!” sound the little Fairy drums.

GUESSING SONG

A CAPTIVE in a cage, through my prison-bars I blink ;
Now I wave my plumes on high, now I let them softly sink.

Yet be careful what you do, if you free me from my cage,
Or your humble slave may turn to a tyrant in a rage :

For I'm sometimes meek and tame, and I'm sometimes fierce and wild,
Now a terror to a man, now a comfort to a child.

Only watch me well enough, and you'll find in me a friend,
Ever ready to oblige and a helping hand to lend ;

I will make your kettle boil under skies of August blue,
Or on frosty nights at home I will toast your toes for you.

SHOPPING

“If you please, if you please, have you pleasure to sell?
I should like half a pound, if you'll wrap it up well
And tie it round tightly with string or with tape
And seal it for safety, that none may escape.”

“I have pleasure in plenty and, if you can pay
My price and find some one to fetch it away,
You may buy half a pound or the whole of my store,
For it's easy, when this is bought up, to get more.”

“I'll pay you your price, if it isn't too high,
And when it's done up, as we're living close by,
I'll carry the parcel myself, for, you know,
We've only old Sandie, and Sandie's too slow.”

“Neither silver nor gold for the purchase you need,
But a single kind word thought or kind word or kind deed:
And you can't take it home; that can only be done
By some child or poor body whose friendship you've won.”

GUESSING SONG

GUESSING SONG

I'm older than the oldest man,
I'm older than the oldest tree ;
When day and night at first began,
Both day and night belong'd to me.

The sunrise and the setting moon
Are marks that measure out my way :
I travel through the heat of noon,
And for the dark make no delay.

All things that change are changed by me,
Yet I myself unchanged abide ;
Although my face you cannot see,
You find my work on every side.

I shape the bud upon the shoot,
And through a never-ending round
Bring bud to flower, and flower to fruit,
And strew the fruit upon the ground.

My hands accomplish tasks untold,
My aching feet ask rest in vain ;
My name is known to young and old,
But who shall make my nature plain ?

THE BOATIE

79

THE BOATIE

OH if I had a little boat, to sail upon the sea,
Would you be venturesome enough to sail along with me?
I'd take the helm and mind the sheet, and you should sit quite near,
And be the Skipper of our craft and tell me where to steer.

Suppose our boat should heel a bit and take some water in,
I'm very sure that you would be too brave to care a pin;
And even if the wind should blow until it blew a gale,
My Skipper would be far too proud to tremble or turn pale.

We'd visit all the Elfin Isles and many a pleasant strand,
The creeks to which the Dwarfs resort, the bays of Giant-land,
The countries where the Beasts can talk and where the Birds are known
To hold their parliaments and dwell in cities of their own.

And if at last this boat of ours flew up into the air,
Instead of feeling frighten'd, we should be quite happy there,
And when it brought us home again, and lighted on the ground,
How pleas'd they'd be to see us, after thinking we were drown'd!

ENVOY

ENVOY

To N. A. S.

You took these nurselings by the hand
And kindly taught them what to do,
Who now, returning to your Land,
Still ask for countenance from you.

They come to thank you and confess
How much—of aught that may accrue
To their attempt of good success—
Belongs of simple right to you.

My thanks they bring with theirs, and yet
No thanks of mine, however true
And warm, avail to pay the debt
Of friendship that I owe to you.

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